

Appl. No. 10/713,857  
Amdt. Dated: October 17, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of July 21, 2006

Attorney Docket No. 89155.0002  
Customer No. 26021

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### REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 21, 2006. Claims 4-6 remain in this application. Claim 4 is the independent Claim. Claim 4 has been amended. It is believed that no new matter is involved in the amendments or arguments presented herein. Reconsideration and entrance of the amendment in the application are respectfully requested.

#### Art-Based Rejections

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Japanese Publication No. 2000-108134 (JP '134) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,423,252 (Chun); Claims 4-6 were rejected over Japanese Publication No. 08-142061 (JP '061) in view of Chun. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and submits that the claims herein are patentable in light of the clarifying amendments above and the arguments below.

#### The JP '134 Reference

JP '134 is directed to the manufacture of a metal mold that can form a concavo-convex pattern in a plastic solid front face at an inexpensive cost. (*See, JP '134, paragraph [0001]*).

#### The Chun Reference

Chun is directed to methods of making biocompatible foams having a micropatterned surface disposed on and integral with at least one surface of the foam. (*See, Chun, column 1, lines 6-8*).

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### The JP '061 Reference

JP '061 is directed to obtaining a molded object characterized in that the attaching mark (welding mark) of a mold surface material is not developed and hexagonal patterns of foamed particles or steam pore marks are erased by the shape of the mold surface material; and having a good appearance. (See, JP '061, Abstract).

### The Claims are Patentable Over the Cited References

The present application is generally directed to a method for manufacturing a core mold for foam-molding to be used for foaming by steam heating a multitude of pre-expanded beads filled in a mold unit to produce a foam-molded article, provided with a concavo-convex pattern on its mold surface for forming a design pattern on the surface of the foam-molded article, and to the core mold manufactured by such a method. (See, Applicant's specification, at page 1, lines 6-12).

As defined by amended independent Claim 4, a core mold for foam-molding manufactured by a method for manufacturing a core mold for foam-molding provided with a concavo-convex pattern on its mold surface for forming a design pattern on the surface of a foam-molded article, that includes the steps of 1) forming a reverse concavo-convex pattern that is reverse of the concavo-convex pattern, on the surface of a core mold making model made of a conductive material having the same shape as said mold surface; and 2) transferring the reverse concavo-convex pattern by electric discharge machining to the mold surface, so as to form the concavo-convex pattern. The core mold includes a steam path disposed through a convex portion of the concavo-convex pattern. The concavo-convex pattern is configured for forming a multitude of protrusions on the surface of the foam-molded article, wherein no dimpled portions are visually recognized to have been formed where the protrusions are not visually recognized to have been formed.

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The applied references do not disclose or suggest the above feature of the present invention as defined by amended independent Claim 4. In particular, the applied references do not disclose or suggest a "concavo-convex pattern is configured for forming a multitude of protrusions on the surface of said foam-molded article, wherein no dimpled portions are visually recognized to have been formed where the protrusions are not visually recognized to have been formed," as required by amended independent Claim 4.

The Examiner states,

*The claims are directed to the core mold itself, not the foam product molded by the mold. The mold structure itself is determinative of patentability, not the features of a product molded by a process using the mold (see discussion above). (See, Office Action, at page 7, line 21- page 8, line 2).*

Claim 4, as amended, clarifies that the mold structure is "configured for forming" the features of the product that are molded by the process. Consequently, the features of the product molded are indirectly afforded patentable weight.

In JP '134, the size and configuration of a steam path disposed on a core mold are arbitrary within the range that beads will not get through the steam path, and in the working example, a width of a steam path and a pitch are described, and a steam path is disposed also on a concave portion of the concavo-convex pattern which was formed on the surface of a core mold. Thus, a steam path mark protruding into the steam path due to expansion during the foaming process will not be uniform. Consequently, the quality of the design pattern is not retained.

In the present invention, by restricting disposition of the steam path onto convex portion of the concavo-convex pattern that is formed on the surface of a core mold, a steam path mark on the surface of concave portion of said concavo-convex pattern formed on the surface of a foam-molding article would be uniform, retaining the high quality of the design pattern.

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Accordingly, amended independent Claim 4 is believed to be in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 5 and 6 depend either directly or indirectly from amended independent Claim 4 and recite additional features of the invention which are neither disclosed nor fairly suggested by the applied references and are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

### Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (310) 785-4721 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,

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